

Part 1 – Identification

Company/Organization Name Meridian Collision Center, Inc. _____

Product/Service: Auto body repair facility _____

Facility location: 15724 Meridian East, Puyallup, WA 98375 _____

Mailing address: 15724 Meridian East, Puyallup, WA 98375 _____

Web address: <http://meridiancollisioncenter.com/>

Contact name: Bill Jorgensen _____ Title: General Manager _____

Telephone: 253-848-2364 Fax: 253-840-1254 E-mail: billj@meridiancollisioncenter.com

If someone other than the contact person completed this application, please provide the following information, in case we have questions.

Name: Nanda Blazej _____ Title: EnviroStars Consultant

Telephone: 206-343-9759 x116 Fax: 206-343-9819 E-mail: nanda@cascadiaconsulting.com

Address: 1109 1st Ave #400, Seattle WA 98101

Have you applied for this award before? NO

Are you submitting attachments? _NO_____

Are you a: Commercial enterprise

How many employees do you have? 32

Part 2 – Overview

1. *Briefly describe your business or organization.*

Meridian Collision Center, Inc. is an auto body repair facility. Meridian shows that collision repair shops can be environmental leaders. They have taken numerous measures to properly manage waste streams, recycle where possible, incorporate environmental management issues into their business plan, provide a safe working environment for their employees, and educate others about being environmentally responsible.

2. *Have you received any **environmental awards** during the last five years? What and when?*

YES, Meridian was certified as an EnviroStar at the 5-star level – the highest level – in 2004 and renewed the certification in 2005 at the 5-star level by setting additional goals.

3. *Have you had any **environmental violations** during the last five years? What and when?*

NO.

Part 3 – Your Efforts

4. How much have you reduced your consumption of materials? Which ones? How did you do that?

This refers to your consumption of raw materials (natural and man-made), supplies and equipment.
Meridian has reduced paint product usage by 35% through using the PPG Global System, which mixes just enough paint per job. Previously, they had three mixing banks that used gallon containers; with the PPG System, they have reduced this to two mixing banks of quart-sized cans.

The PPG Global System has also reduced Meridian's need to purchase and keep multiple products on hand. For example, PPG Global has one hardener product for primers and top coats; as opposed to the previous system, which required five hardeners.

5. How much have you changed to materials that are more sustainable? How did you do that?

This refers to materials that are more common, less toxic, more durable, more easily recycled, more safely assimilated by nature at the end of the product's life, or from renewable sources.
Meridian has reduced hazardous materials by changing to the 3M plastic cup system, which is a reinforcing cup with a bladder system that requires much less paint per job than conventional spray systems.

6. How much recycled material do you buy? What type?

This refers to buying raw materials, items or supplies made from recycled, rather than virgin, stock.
All office paper and paper products (i.e. paper towels) that are purchased are made with recycled-content. Meridian also tries to purchase as many good quality recycled car parts as possible.

7. How much have you reduced your consumption of fresh water? How did you do that?

This refers to the use of fresh water in your process, product, or service. If you use recycled water, it can come from on- or off-site.
Meridian does not do a lot of car washing on their site. When they do wash cars, they use waterless cleaners whenever possible. They have shifted from washing tires and wheels with a hose to washing them by hand so as to reduce the amount of hazardous residue from that particular part of a car that can leach into the water system.

8. How much have you reduced your consumption of energy? How did you do that?

This refers to reducing your direct energy use, including employee commuting.
Meridian replaced their old fluorescent light ballasts with low mercury bulbs, which saves energy over time and creates less hazardous waste. They also maintain minimal lighting in the early mornings after the administrator has arrived but before the employees are ready to work.

Meridian has switched from using a typical piston compressor in its shop that needs to be charged up for about an hour before it's ready to use, to a Kaeser compressor that requires no pre-charging. This has significantly cut down on energy bills.

Altogether, with the new compressor and emphasis on minimal lighting, Meridian's power bills have decreased by about 25%.

9. How much have you changed your energy use from non-renewable to renewable sources? How did you do that?

This refers to changing from fossil fuels to renewable sources, such as solar, wind and tidal. Show also any contributions you have made to renewable energy programs.

Meridian has not shifted to non-renewable sources of energy, but they are in the middle of switching from natural gas to using recovered oil to heat their facility. Meridian currently drains oil from local fire district vehicles, and beginning this fall, they will have an oil-burning furnace that will use this recaptured oil, thereby decreasing their dependency on natural gas and reducing the amount of oil they send to hazardous waste facilities.

10. How much have you reduced or eliminated waste and emissions? How did you do that?

*This includes the waste your operations generate and both the permitted and unpermitted emissions and discharges from your operations. Show also any contributions you have made to programs that mitigate the negative effects of using fossil fuels, such as carbon dioxide buyback. If you reduced waste through recycling, **describe what happens to the material you collect for recycling.***

Meridian has a goal to reduce their hazardous paint waste to zero. They are well on their way to achieving this goal; the only paint waste they currently generate is 24 ounces per week of solvent to clean paint guns. Specifically, they do the following:

- By mixing just enough paint per job, they have reduced excess paint waste. When they have a small amount of catalyzed paint left over after a job, they process it through their solvent distillation machine.
- By donating leftover paint to Clover Technical College, thus reducing their paint waste.
- By donating hardened paint leftovers to local artists who use the material in creative projects.
- By using a 3M cup system, paint gun clean-up needs no more than one ounce of solvent per paint gun. With an average of 24 colors per week, this is 24 gun cleanings per week, or only 24 ounces. With more and more recycling of solvent, they will soon have virtually no paint waste.

The company has also reduced solid waste in the following ways:

- Switching from using wooden stir sticks to metal sticks, which they wash in their enclosed gun washer and reuse.
- Changing from using standard paint gun caps to a new 3M system, which has reduced waste products.
- Recycling headlights, metal, aluminum wheels, and plastic from dashboards and bumper covers. Bumper covers are picked up by a vendor who repairs and recycles them.

11. Is your product or service environmentally superior to others? Why?

This refers to aspects of your product or service that have a more positive effect upon the environment during their entire life cycle.

Meridian's service has a more positive effect upon the environment than other auto body shops because of all of the efforts the company has made to minimize its impact on the environment.

12. What have you done to reduce negative effects upon biodiversity from the manufacturing or use of your products or services?

This refers to your efforts to evaluate and reduce any negative effects upon biodiversity from your operations, production and consumer use of your products or services. It includes effects upon the area where your materials or resources are extracted or harvested through to where your product or service is used.

Meridian only purchases products from local suppliers that are either EnviroStars members or recognized environmentally conscientious leaders. Meridian purchases its radiators from NW Radiator which is a 4-star EnviroStars business. Meridian has also included LDI Paints, its sole paint-supplier, in their final EnviroStars visit.

**13. What have been the economic benefits of your efforts, to your company and your community?
What have been the costs?**

This refers to benefits such as increasing efficiency per unit produced, eliminating disposal fees, developing new markets, and reducing liability exposure. Costs described should include the “externalized costs” to your community from providing your service or from the use and final disposal of your product.

Meridian has only seen economic benefits from adopting more environmentally-friendly processes. They have seen the largest cost-savings in paint supplies. Since switching to the 3M cup system their monthly paint bills have gone from \$32,000 per month to \$25,000 per month. The 3M system has also helped reduce the amount of leftover liquid paint and consequent hazardous waste disposal costs.

Meridian has also decreased costs on other supplies by reorganizing its many supplies into one centrally located storage facility. Having all supplies in one place has significantly decreased over-ordering of materials.

14. What have been the benefits to your employees or volunteers of your efforts?

This refers to benefits such as increased worker satisfaction, reduced worker exposure to hazards, and improved employee/employer relations.

Meridian holds weekly shop meetings to review safety and environmental issues and to talk about ways to improve their operations. Employees are thus invested in the quality of their work and in caring for the environment. The company has invested in providing a quality work environment, including its wash/prep area, the spray booths, and the spray gun cleaners. The continuous education and plentiful reminder signs hanging throughout the shop help to maintain proper, safe handling practices and minimization of hazardous waste.

All employees are asked to sign a statement that they will follow all procedures and adopt an environmental ethic when working at Meridian. Managers and janitors monitor the facility and workers closely to ensure that safe practices are being followed.

Additionally, employees are rewarded for their efforts by receiving back proceeds from metal, cardboard, and aluminum wheel recycling in the form of employee breakfasts and lunches.

15. What have you done to support your local community? To support our global community?

This refers to contributions to environmental well-being in your facility’s neighborhood and in the communities that provide your resources. It includes promoting “environmental justice” – the equitable distribution of environmental benefits and risks among diverse economic and cultural communities

Meridian strives to talk with all of its customers about the EnviroStars program and the overall importance of recycling and environmental stewardship. In addition to educating the public as much as possible, Meridian supports other local EnviroStars and/or environmentally responsible companies when purchasing its own products, services, etc. It’s also beneficial for customers’ insurance companies to deal with environmentally conscious companies such as Meridian.

16. How were your efforts innovative from what is commonly practiced in your field?

Did you take new or different approaches? Did you solve problems in ways that had not been explored? Did you overcome barriers or challenges, such as engineering problems, distance to markets or resistance from others in your field?

Meridian is unique in the field, as most collision shops do not focus as much on reducing waste through their processes (i.e. using the 3M paint system) or only buying products from environmentally conscious

providers. Meridian is also going above and beyond normal practice in that it's trying to get its closest competitor to adopt more environmentally sound practices.

17. What environmental leadership have you shown?

Have you helped others move towards sustainability? Have you mentored others or shared your knowledge with your community, industry, or association?

Bill is state-certified to teach insurance agents about estimating. He currently teaches estimating and environmental issues at Clover Park Technical College's autobody program, and is on the board of Clover Park Technical College and a member of the Automotive Services Association. Bill also recently became state certified to teach continuing education classes to insurance agents covering some of the best management practices autobody shops can be doing to help protect the environment. He tells his customers, the fire department, and others about his EnviroStars certification.

Meridian continually researches new products and processes that are safer for the environment.

18. Do you follow environmentally-preferable purchasing guidelines? Describe them.

Identify the products you purchase, such as recycled paper that has been processed chlorine free or hybrid cars. Explain your procedures for identifying environmentally preferable products, such as "Green Seal" labels or other certification systems.

All office paper and paper products (i.e. paper towels) are made with recycled-content. Meridian also tries to purchase as many good quality recycled car parts as possible.

19. If you sell a product, what happens to it after its use?

Can it be: Reused or reclaimed? (If so, what share is being reused or reclaimed?) Returned? (For example, in a product stewardship program.) Safely assimilated by nature at the end of its useful life?

Meridian primarily sells labor, not products.

Please note: By applying, applicants grant permission to the Washington State Department of Ecology to publish a summary of their accomplishments.



If you need this information in an alternate format, please call the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program at 360-407-6700. If you are a person with a speech or hearing impairment, call 711, or 800-833-6388 for TTY.